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SWAFFHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

together with the

REPORT

of the

SANITARY INSPECTOR

1954.



S T A F F

Medical Officer of Health Robert N.C. McCurdy, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.
Sanitary Inspector John Miles, M.Inst.H.E., C.R.S.I.

COMMITTEES concerned with matters of PUBLIC HEALTH.

- Finance & General Purposes Committee.
- Housing Committee.
- Housing Investigation Committee.
- Roads & Sanitary Committee.
- Water Supplies & Sewerage Committee.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area in acres	...	...	...	...	...	7,592
Population (estimated at mid-year by Registrar-General) ..	...	...	...	...	...	3,030
Number of inhabited houses	...	...	...	...	...	1,148
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	£14,642
Product of 1d. Rate	...	...	...	...	...	£56. 6. 6d.

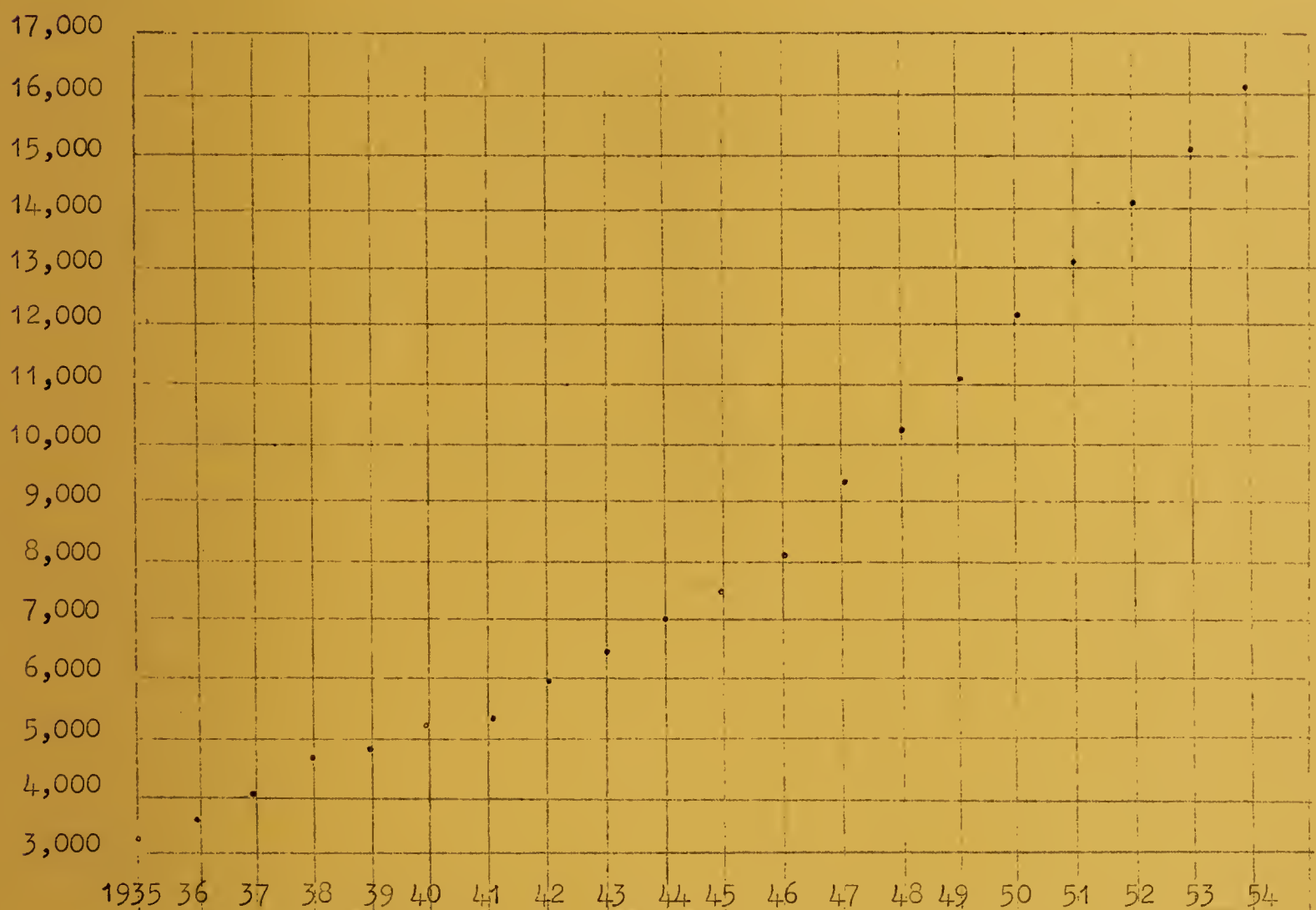
Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1954.

The birth rate has fallen once more to below the national and county rates. Likewise, the death rate has remained slightly above the national and county rates.

A small increase in deaths from cancer included one from cancer of the lung and bronchus. There were seven deaths from cancer of the lung and bronchus in this area of the County in 1954. Their average age at death was 60.4 whereas the expectation of life at birth is now over 70 years.

The following graph shows the number of deaths from cancer of the lung and bronchus in England and Wales in each year since 1935:-



"If many thousands of people are dying annually from a disease and statistical evidence indicates that the probability is very high that the main cause lies in an article X, it is hardly sensible to sit back and wait maybe 20 years, for the experimental evidence. Indeed, unequivocal evidence may never be obtained in a case of a disease which takes a very long time to develop in man after application of an irritant or of an initiator. In such a case the responsibility of advising the community is a serious one, and it is idle to suppose it can be evaded by pretending that statistical evidence alone is of no account.

We are faced with such a situation today in regard to lung cancer and tobacco-smoking, and, whilst it is fortunate that tobacco is not a necessity of life, the position is complicated by considerations of finance." (British Medical Journal, 17th. October, 1953).

Whilst it is fortunate that tobacco is not a necessity of life, this circumstance helps, paradoxically, to prevent anything very much being done about the problem.

If a small number of deaths were believed to be associated with a certain water supply, steps would at once be taken to provide an alternative supply pending investigations. In the case of tobacco it is only too easy for the official shoulder to be shrugged with the excuse that it is up to the individual to decide for himself whether the use of tobacco involves an amount of risk which it is unwise to take.

The number of cases of infectious diseases notified was 31, the lowest for 5 years.

MILK & DAIRIES REGULATIONS, 1949, REGULATION 20.

No action was taken during the year under this Regulation.

FOOD POISONING.

No cases of food poisoning were notified during the year.

MEDICAL STATISTICS.

<u>BIRTHS</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Live Births	23	13	36
Stillbirths	1	1	2

POPULATION AT MID-YEAR, BIRTHS, BIRTHRATE, STILLBIRTHS,
STILLBIRTH RATES, DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954
Population	3,048	2,923	3,006	3,012	3,030
Births (total)	40	42	36	45	36
Birthrate per 1,000 of population	13.1	14.4	11.9	14.9	11.9
Stillbirths	1	2	0	1	2
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 of population	0.33	0.68	0	0.33	0.67
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 total births	24.4	45.4	0	21.7	52.6

<u>DEATHS</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
All ages	20	16	36
Infants under 1 year	0	0	0

POPULATION AT MID-YEAR, DEATHS, DEATHRATE, INFANT
DEATHS AND INFANT MORTALITY RATE, DURING THE PAST
FIVE YEARS.

	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954
Population	3,048	2,923	3,006	3,012	3,030
Deaths	34	47	37	36	36
Deathrate per 1,000 of population	11.2	16.1	12.3	11.9	11.9
Infant Deaths	2	1	2	2	0
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births . .	50	23.8	55.6	44.4	0

DEATHS FROM CERTAIN SELECTED CAUSES DURING THE
PAST FIVE YEARS.

Cause	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954
Tuberculosis	0	0	1	1	0
Bronchitis and Pneumonia .	1	6	4	2	3
Other notifiable infectious diseases	0	0	0	1	0
Motor vehicle and other accidents	2	1	1	2	0
Pregnancy, childbirth and abortion	0	0	0	0	0
Cancer	10	10	2	5	7

DEATHS ACCORDING TO AGES (compiled from returns
submitted by the District Registrar).

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
Under 1 year	0	0	0
1 and under 5	0	0	0
5 " " 10	0	0	0
10 " " 20	0	0	0
20 " " 30	0	0	0
30 " " 40	0	1	1
40 " " 50	2	0	2
50 " " 60	0	2	2
60 " " 70	6	3	9
70 " " 80	8	4	12
80 " " 90	3	5	8
90 and over	1	1	2
Totals	20	16	36

CAUSES OF DEATH AT AGES ABOVE 1 YEAR AND BELOW 50.

Age Group	Sex	Cause
30 to 40	Female	Emphysema
40 to 50	Male	Coronary Thrombosis
	Male	Cancer of Stomach

DEATHS FROM ALL CAUSES (Registrar-General's Short List).

List No.	Cause	Male	Female	Total
1	Tuberculosis, respiratory . . .	0	0	0
2	Tuberculosis, other	0	0	0
3	Syphilitic disease	0	0	0
4	Diphtheria	0	0	0
5	Whooping Cough.	0	0	0
6	Meningococcal infections. . . .	0	0	0
7	Acute Poliomyelitis	0	0	0
8	Measles	0	0	0
9	Other infective and parasitic diseases	0	0	0
10	Malignant neoplasm, stomach . .	3	2	5
11	Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	1	0	1
12	Malignant neoplasm, breast . .	0	0	0
13	Malignant neoplasm, uterus . .	0	0	0
14	Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	0	1	1
15	Leukaemia, aleukaemia	0	0	0
16	Diabetes	0	0	0
17	Vascular lesions of nervous system	4	1	5
18	Coronary disease, angina . . .	6	1	7
19	Hypertension with heart disease	1	1	2
20	Other heart disease	3	2	5
21	Other circulatory disease . . .	1	2	3
22	Influenza	0	2	2
23	Pneumonia	0	0	0
24	Bronchitis	1	2	3
Carried forward		20	14	34

List No.	Cause	Male	Female	Total
	Brought forward	20	14	34
25	Other diseases of respiratory system	0	1	1
26	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum . .	0	0	0
27	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	0	0	0
28	Nephritis and nephrosis	0	0	0
29	Hyperplasia of prostate	0	0	0
30	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion .	0	0	0
31	Congenital malformations	0	0	0
32	Other defined and ill-defined diseases	0	1	1
33	Motor vehicle accidents	0	0	0
34	All other accidents	0	0	0
35	Suicide	0	0	0
36	Homicide and operations of war. .	0	0	0
	All causes	20	16	36

THE FOLLOWING TABLE COMPARES BIRTHRATES, DEATHRATES, ETC. OF THIS DISTRICT WITH THOSE OF ENGLAND AND WALES AND OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF NORFOLK IN 1954.

	England and Wales.	Norfolk	District
Birthrate	15.2	15.1	11.9
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 total births	23.4	24.2	0.67
Deathrate	11.3	11.7	11.9
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births . . .	25.5	20.9	0.0
Tuberculosis deathrate per 1,000 population . . .	0.18	0.11	0.0

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954
Tuberculosis, all sites	5	1	1	1	1
Scarlet Fever	4	6	12	5	4
Whooping Cough	1	13	1	64	8
Diphtheria	1	0	0	0	0
Measles	131	3	54	49	11
Poliomyelitis.	0	0	1	0	0
Pneumonia	0	9	1	3	2
Infectious Jaundice.	2	1	2	2	5

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED IN 1954 BY AGES.

Disease	Under 1 yr.	1-5	5-10	10-15	15-25	25-45	45-65	Over 65	Total
Tuberculosis, all sites . . .	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Scarlet Fever . .	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	4
Whooping Cough . .	1	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	8
Measles	-	4	5	1	1	-	-	-	11
Pneumonia	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
Infectious Jauncide	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	-	5

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED IN 1954 BY MONTH
OF NOTIFICATION.

Diseases	Jan	Feb	Mch	Apl	May	Jn	Jly	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Tuberculosis, all sites . .	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Scarlet Fever .	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4
Whooping Cough .	2	3	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	8
Measles	-	-	-	6	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	11
Pneumonia.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Infectious jaundice	1	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	5

THE FOLLOWING TABLE SHOWS THE NUMBER OF CASES ON THE
TUBERCULOSIS REGISTER AT 31st. DECEMBER, 1954, COMPARED
WITH 31st. DECEMBER, 1953.

	Respiratory			Non-Respiratory			Grand Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
31. 12. 53.	7	5	12	0	0	0	12
31. 12. 54.	6	2	8	0	0	0	8

I should like to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council and my colleagues on the staff, for their continued support and help during the year.

I have the honour to be,
Your obedient Servant,

ROBERT N.C. McCURDY.

Medical Officer of Health.

SWAFFHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT FOR YEAR 1954.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I commenced duty in Swaffham on the 1st. April, 1954, and now present my first annual report as Sanitary Inspector. This report will not be as exhaustive as those of my predecessors, as the first year in a new district must of necessity be somewhat exploratory, but for the purpose of comparison and the easier assessment of progress, I have followed the form of previous reports.

HOUSING.

Housing progress was as follows:-

No. of houses built by the Council	10
do. Private Enterprise.	3
	<u>13</u>

The total for 1953 was 29, but it should here be mentioned that already the Council have embarked on a large building scheme at Sporle Road, and substantial progress should be evident in the next report.

At the end of the year under review, the Council owned 282 houses, bringing the percentage of Council-owned houses in the town to 24%. One extra man was engaged on the repair staff, bringing the total number, including painters, to 4.

The Council made two grants under the Housing Act, 1949, to enable owners to recondition their houses. Previous reports to the Council, and considerable Government publicity have brought this matter to the public notice and there can be no doubt that, properly interpreted, this provision can be used with very good effect in suitable cases. I would suggest, however, that it is not wise to entertain applications unless the properties are demonstrably in good structural condition. The mere fact of converting a bedroom to a bathroom and installing a sink in the kitchen does little to preserve a house which, through age or neglect, has become structurally deficient. Such grants should be made to ensure a new lease of life, with increased amenities, to any property so considered. I make this point as I find that in many cases applications are made as a last desperate endeavour to save a property from demolition, and this, emphatically, is not the purpose of such grants as I understand the Minister's directions.

Preliminary survey work has been carried out to provide the material for the Council's future slum clearance proposals. It is encouraging to note that in this important matter, the Council are strongly adhering to their policy of closing scheduled houses as soon as they become vacant, and real progress in slum clearance is being made.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

There was a further increase of the flooded portion of the irrigation area at the Disposal Works, but as the matter is already under active review, I do not propose to comment further on this problem.

The sewerage system has functioned fairly well throughout the year, though there have been occasions when the New Sporle Road sewer has become surcharged in times of storm. This sewer must be periodically scraped, as it is obvious that the slight gradient causes rapid silting up of the pipes.

HOUSE REFUSE AND NIGHT SOIL.

There have been no complaints on the subject of the house refuse collecting service. The tip is sited so far from the built-up area that very little nuisance could arise from this source.

The cost of the collection of night soil has frequently been referred to and mention has been made of possible grants to property owners willing to convert pail closets to the water carriage system. I rather incline to the view that such owners might well be persuaded to do this work at their own expense, with slum clearance becoming part of the national policy.

SCAVENGING.

It has now been possible to share with the County Council in a regular system of gully cleansing by mechanical means on contract basis. This method is not only more hygienic, but gulleys are now emptied more frequently.

With regard to street sweeping, it might be as well to draw the attention of the Council to the increased lengths of streets to be cleansed as compared with a few years ago. The same labour is used as then, but The Oaklands, Coronation Grove, Westfield Road, Orford Road and Manor Way have all been added. Extra labour must be allocated for this purpose in future estimates.

WATER SUPPLY.

The new borehole referred to in my predecessor's report has been completed and will ensure an ample supply for the town in future years. The quality of the water, as revealed by reports from the Public Health Service Laboratory, was excellent. The Council might consider measures to soften this very hard water supply, for the public would inevitably benefit from such a scheme. Material savings would accrue in money spent on soap and the maintenance of hot water services, to mention two common sources of expenditure.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

This is not a very onerous work in Swaffham, and what steps were necessary were made easy by the co-operative attitude of the business heads of the town.

FOOD INSPECTION.

I have noted an increasing awareness on the part of the catering trade to the good business value of high standards of cleanliness. It is inevitable that lapses occur, but such instances have always been corrected when attention has been directed to the fault.

The same attitude applies to the retail food trade, and my services were always requested when the slightest doubt existed as to the fitness of any food for sale. This form of co-operation between the trade and the public health service has been of considerable help and encouragement to me in the performance of my duty.

No specific campaign with regard to food hygiene was undertaken during the year, but several visits were made to each cafe to observe general conditions and methods.

It has been my experience that co-operation is easier established by rational and informal approach than by statutory action, although the provisions of the Food and Drugs Acts are indubitably necessary as a safeguard should formal action be required.

I see no useful purpose in stating here the quantities of food condemned but such information is, of course, available in the registers.

The following is a summary of food premises in the town:-

Butchers' shops ,,,	5
Grocers' and greengrocers	13
Cafes and Restaurants.. ...	6
Bakers and confectioners... ..	5
Fishmongers and fryers	3
Milk, Ice-cream etc	12

All meat condemned at slaughterhouses is coloured with the green dye recommended by the Minister. This meat is disposed of in the normal way through trade channels to the waste products industry. Condemned tinned foods and fish are treated with a form of disinfectant and taken to the refuse disposal tip by the Council's workmen.

MEAT INSPECTION.

On 1st. July, the Ministry relinquished control of meat production and Swaffham took over the responsibility of three private slaughterhouses. One slaughterhouse was operated by a multiple firm to supply their branches over a very considerable area. A second was used for wholesale purposes and the third, though used for private trade, was used extensively.

In the first half-year there was a 50% increase in the number of animals slaughtered in the town and the trend is still upwards. I estimate that the aggregate time spent on meat inspection approximates to $1\frac{1}{2}$ days each week at the present time. It is an anomalous position that Swaffham should be responsible for this work, when 2 hours per week would be ample for the inspection of the meat actually consumed in the town itself.

In considering the statistics dealing with this subject, it will be noted that under Item 3, fewer whole carcasses were condemned. This is due to the fact that during the period of Ministry control, all casualty animals from the surrounding district were brought to the slaughterhouse. This does not now apply.

It is interesting to note in this connection that the final report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Slaughterhouses published its report in July 1955, recommending in principle the adoption of a system of "moderate concentration" as the object to be achieved. This envisages the closing of all small slaughterhouses, with the provision of modern buildings, planned and equipped on the conveyor belt system, to serve a population between 130,000 and 150,000.

Carcasses Inspected and Condemned.

Item	Description	Cattle	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Total
1	Number killed	1,304	650	1,778	3,732
2	Number inspected	1,285	606	1,714	3,605
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis:-</u>					
3	whole carcasses condemned	9	5	12	26
4	carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	490	37	72	599
5	percentage of the number inspected affected with a disease other than Tuberculosis ignoring broken legs or tissues defective from fighting, fences etc.	36	5	4	16

contd.

Item	Description	Cattle	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Total
6	<u>Tuberculosis only:-</u> whole carcasses condemned	9	-	4	13
7	carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned (taking into account that the offal, head and tongue etc., may be parts of one animal)	87	-	38	125
8	percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	7	-	2	4
9	average number of animals slaughtered per week (less Holidays) 25		13	35	73
10	percentage examined by the Meat Inspector.	98	92	96	97

RODENT CONTROL.

This work was carried on as in previous years. I noticed that the general public was quicker to take advantage of this service now that it has become better known.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

Item	Description	Inspections	Notices served	Nuisances abated or pending
1	Factories and Workshops	12	-	-
2	Bakehouses, Foodshops, Market and Abattoir	340	-	-
3	Housing Defects (Housing Act, 1936)	25	2	2
4	Middens, Ashpits and Bins (Public Health Act, 1936)	9	9	8 (1 pending)
5	Infectious Diseases	2	-	2 Fumigations
6	Rodent Control (Pests Act, 1949)	27	-	-
7	Dangerous Buildings	3	3	3
8	Tents, Vans, Sheds etc.	4	-	-
9	Water Supply	7	-	-
10	Drains, Cesspools, Vaults, Pail and Water Closets and Drainage of Premises	37	6	6
11	Ice Cream and Milk	6	-	-
Total		472	20	21 (1 pending)

NOTE: Council houses (282) are not included in above.

I have the honour to be,
Your obedient Servant,

JOHN MILES.

Sanitary Inspector.

